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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE  
NASHVILLE DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	)	
vs	)	Case No. 3:24-cr-00178-1
REYNALDO SALINAS-CRUZ	)	

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BEFORE THE HONORABLE  
Aleta A. Trauger, District Judge  
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
November 12, 2024

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APPEARANCES:

For the Government:	Joshua A. Kurtzman US Attorney's Office 719 Church Street Suite 3300 Nashville, TN 37203
For the Defendant:	Mary K. Harcombe Federal Public Defender's Office 810 Broadway Suite 200 Nashville, TN 37203
Interpreter:	Judith Kristy

Patricia A. Jennings, RMR, CRR  
Official Court Reporter  
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1           The above-styled cause came to be heard on  
2 November 12, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., before the Honorable Aleta  
3 A. Trauger, District Judge, when the following proceedings  
4 were had, to-wit:

5  
6           THE COURT: Good afternoon. Let's swear the  
7 interpreter, Ms. Kristy.

8           COURTROOM DEPUTY: Please raise your right hand.  
9           (Interpreter sworn.)

10          INTERPRETER: I do.

11          THE COURT: All right. We are here on -- we're  
12 here on a change of plea in United States versus Reynaldo  
13 Salinas-Cruz. We have Josh Kurtzman for the government.  
14 Good afternoon.

15          MR. KURTZMAN: Good afternoon, Your Honor.

16          THE COURT: And Mary Harcombe for  
17 Mr. Salinas-Cruz. I think we'll let him remain where he is  
18 so that the interpreter can -- does she need to be next to  
19 him, rather than -- does she need to be on the other side of  
20 him? Wouldn't that be better or not?

21          INTERPRETER: It's not necessary, Your Honor, but  
22 it would be perhaps convenient in case he wanted to make any  
23 signals to me or --

24          THE COURT: She can't hear what you're saying. I  
25 think that as long as the equipment is working, it's fine;

1 right?

2 THE INTERPRETER: It's not necessary as long as we  
3 have equipment, but it could be interesting for him to be in  
4 between the two of us.

5 MS. HARCOTBE: She said that that might be easier.  
6 I think she has to stay plugged in. So I guess he and I will  
7 move over.

8 THE COURT: Okay. Why can't he just scoot over,  
9 and --

10 MS. HARCOTBE: Oh, you're right.

11 THE COURT: -- you sit where he's sitting? Okay.  
12 You're too young to have a slip like that, Ms. Harcombe.

13 MS. HARCOTBE: Good point. I'm so used to sitting  
14 on that side of my client --

15 THE COURT: I see. Okay.

16 MS. HARCOTBE: -- but in my mind, that's just what  
17 we're doing.

18 THE COURT: All right. I'm sorry, but...

19 MS. HARCOTBE: Good thing someone's on top of  
20 things today.

21 THE COURT: Okay. Well, I try.

22 All right. Let's swear the defendant.

23 COURTROOM DEPUTY: Would the defendant please  
24 rise. Raise your right hand.

25 (Defendant sworn.)

1 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

2 THE COURT: Okay. Be seated. Should I call him  
3 Mr. Salinas or Mr. Cruz or Mr. Salinas-Cruz?

4 MS. HARCMBE: It's Salinas-Cruz.

5 THE COURT: Salinas-Cruz.

6 MS. HARCMBE: So it is -- it is both.

7 THE COURT: Okay. All right. Mr. Salinas-Cruz,  
8 everything you say in court today is under oath and could be  
9 used against you in a prosecution for committing perjury or  
10 making a false statement.

11 Do you understand that?

12 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

13 THE COURT: How far did you go in school?

14 THE DEFENDANT: Up to sixth grade.

15 THE COURT: Can you read and write in Spanish?

16 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

17 THE COURT: Some, but not fluently?

18 THE DEFENDANT: Uh-huh.

19 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Salinas-Cruz, you are  
20 charged in an indictment returned by the grand jury in this  
21 district on October 2nd of 2024 with the following offenses:

22 Count One charges beginning not later than  
23 September of 2023 and continuing through at least May 17 of  
24 2024, in this district and elsewhere, you and your  
25 co-defendant, Sofia Rodas, conspired to knowingly and

1 unlawfully -- they didn't enter into a marriage. The two  
2 defendants didn't enter into a marriage.

3 MR. KURTZMAN: No, they're charged with conspiracy  
4 in Count One, Your Honor.

5 THE COURT: Conspiracy to have other people enter  
6 into a marriage.

7 MS. HARCUMBE: With a third person.

8 THE COURT: With a third person. All right.  
9 Well, the indictment is not very artfully worded,  
10 Mr. Kurtzman, but I will overlook that for now.

11 MR. KURTZMAN: Thank you, Your Honor.

12 THE COURT: All right. At any rate, that you  
13 conspired to knowingly and unlawfully have a third person  
14 enter into marriage with yourself for the purpose of evading  
15 the immigration laws of the United States.

16 And Count Two charges that on or about October 6th  
17 of 2023, you, an alien, a non-citizen of the United States,  
18 knowingly and unlawfully entered into marriage for the  
19 purpose of evading immigration laws of the United States.

20 Do you feel that you understand this charge --  
21 these charges against you?

22 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

23 THE COURT: Have you told your lawyer everything  
24 you know about the facts that support these charges against  
25 you?

1 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

2 THE COURT: Has she told you what the government  
3 would have to prove for you to be found guilty of these  
4 charges?

5 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

6 THE COURT: Has she discussed with you any  
7 possible defenses you might have?

8 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

9 THE COURT: Has she done all the investigation you  
10 have asked her to do?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

12 THE COURT: Are you satisfied with her  
13 representation of you so far?

14 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

15 THE COURT: Mr. Salinas-Cruz, these offenses both  
16 carry up to five years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000.  
17 Count One, the conspiracy charge, carries a supervised  
18 release term of up to five years, and Count Two carries -- I  
19 guess they're both up to five years. Yeah, they're both up  
20 to five years of -- well --

21 MS. HARCUMBE: I believe --

22 THE COURT: They're both up to three years. I'm  
23 sorry. They're both up to three years of supervised release,  
24 and they both have a \$100 special assessment.

25 I want to explain a little more about those

1 penalties to you. We do not have any parole in the federal  
2 system. We have a system of good-time credits that you might  
3 or might not earn, up to 54 days per year. However many days  
4 you earn would be credited at the end of each year and would  
5 shorten your jail time by that much. Any jail time is  
6 followed --

7 MS. HARCUMBE: I believe the machine stopped  
8 working.

9 THE COURT: Is it working? Okay. Any jail time  
10 is followed by a period of supervised release, where you  
11 would be reporting to a probation officer and having to  
12 comply with certain conditions. If you violated any of those  
13 conditions, your supervised release could be revoked, and you  
14 could be made to serve additional time in prison.

15 These offenses carry substantial fines. I must  
16 levy a fine against you, unless I find you are financially  
17 unable to pay a fine. The \$100 special assessment must be  
18 paid no matter what your ability is to pay it.

19 These are felonies you're offering to plead guilty  
20 to. Conviction of a felony may deprive you of the right to  
21 vote, the right to possess a firearm, and these convictions  
22 may be counted as necessary prior convictions in a  
23 prosecution for being a habitual criminal.

24 Because you are not a citizen of the  
25 United States, I must ask you if you have discussed the

1 possible immigration consequences of a guilty plea with your  
2 lawyer.

3 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

4 THE COURT: Do you understand that since you are  
5 not a citizen, in addition to the other possible penalties  
6 you are facing, a plea of guilty may subject you to  
7 deportation, exclusion or voluntary departure, and may  
8 prevent you from obtaining US citizenship? Do you understand  
9 that?

10 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

11 THE COURT: Are you presently on probation or  
12 parole from any other offense?

13 THE DEFENDANT: No.

14 THE COURT: I want to explain to you the important  
15 constitutional rights you're giving up by pleading guilty.  
16 You have the right to go to trial with the assistance of your  
17 lawyer, who would confront and cross-examine the witnesses on  
18 your behalf. You could not be made to take the stand,  
19 testify, incriminate yourself, call a witness, or put on any  
20 kind of a case at all. It would be the government's sole  
21 burden to prove each and every element of these offenses  
22 beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury of  
23 12 people. Their verdict would have to be unanimous.

24 Do you understand that by pleading guilty you're  
25 giving up all of those important constitutional rights?



1 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

2 THE COURT: And do you understand there will be no  
3 further trial of any sort, there will just be a sentencing  
4 hearing in front of me?

5 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

6 THE COURT: You are proposing to plead guilty to  
7 these two offenses without a plea agreement.

8 Is that what you wish to do?

9 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

10 THE COURT: Has anyone promised or suggested to  
11 you what sentence I will give you in order to get you to  
12 plead guilty?

13 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

14 THE COURT: Let me ask the question again. Has  
15 anyone promised or suggested to you what sentence I will give  
16 you in order to get you to plead guilty?

17 THE DEFENDANT: No.

18 MS. HARCOTBE: And, Your Honor, I think the  
19 confusion was we did talk about the guidelines. And so I  
20 think that that's the --

21 THE COURT: Okay. All right. You understand that  
22 the Court must compute the advisory guideline range for your  
23 case? Do you understand that?

24 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

25 THE COURT: But do you understand that those

1 guidelines are not binding on me? I can give you a sentence  
2 below the guidelines or a sentence above the guidelines. Do  
3 you understand that?

4 THE DEFENDANT: Uh-huh. Yes.

5 THE COURT: Okay. Has anyone put any kind of  
6 pressure on you, psychological or physical, to get you to  
7 plead guilty?

8 THE DEFENDANT: No.

9 THE COURT: Have you had any alcohol in the last  
10 12 hours?

11 THE DEFENDANT: No.

12 THE COURT: Have you had any narcotics,  
13 hallucinogens or medicine containing narcotics in the last  
14 12 hours?

15 THE DEFENDANT: No.

16 THE COURT: Are you on any medication at all  
17 today?

18 THE DEFENDANT: No.

19 THE COURT: Is your mind clear, and you feel like  
20 you know what you're doing?

21 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

22 THE COURT: All right. I'm going to ask all  
23 parties to execute the petition and pass it forward.

24 Mr. Salinas-Cruz, have you read -- I know the  
25 petition has been translated into Spanish. Have you read the

1 entire petition to enter a plea of guilty and do you feel  
2 that you understand it?

3 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

4 THE COURT: All right. If you would sign the  
5 petition and pass it forward.

6 MS. HARCUMBE: Sorry, Judge. I had it right here,  
7 and then I moved. I can't remember where I put the original  
8 copy. Here it is.

9 THE COURT: Has Mr. Kurtzman signed it?

10 MS. HARCUMBE: Yes, ma'am, he has.

11 THE COURT: All right. All right. Mr. Kurtzman,  
12 I'll hear the facts. Don't go too fast. You got a lot of  
13 facts to give here.

14 (Mr. Kurtzman was sworn.)

15 MR. KURTZMAN: I do.

16 (As read:) Your Honor, Katia Duenas-Aguilar, a  
17 United States citizen, enlisted in the United States Army and  
18 was stationed at Fort Campbell in June 2019. Katia became  
19 romantically involved with another soldier and gave birth to  
20 a son in April of 2020. Katia would eventually marry the  
21 father of her child, Kendryk, in August 2021.

22 Sometime in 2021, Katia was working part-time at  
23 an El Salvadoran restaurant in Clarksville to supplement her  
24 military pay and met Sofia Rodas. Katia and Rodas became  
25 friends, and Rodas eventually introduced Katia to Rodas's

1 boyfriend, Reynaldo Salinas-Cruz. Salinas-Cruz and Rodas  
2 lived together in a home in Cumberland Furnace, Tennessee,  
3 that they purchased in December of 2020.

4           In December 2022, Rodas married a soldier, Jeffrey  
5 Thompson, despite the fact that she continued to live in the  
6 home she shared with Cruz. Based on a review of Rodas's  
7 phone, it does not appear that she ever moved in with  
8 Thompson from when they were married until October 2023, that  
9 she remained romantically involved with Cruz, and this  
10 marriage was likely an effort by Rodas to obtain her  
11 United States citizenship or alter her citizenship status.  
12 On October 26, 2023, Thompson purchased and closed on a house  
13 in Clarksville, and it appears that Rodas and her daughter  
14 planned to move in with him. On October 28, 2023, Rodas  
15 brought dinner to Thompson's house and spent a few hours with  
16 him. However, at around 9 p.m., Thompson texted Rodas the  
17 following messages:

18           9:09 p.m.: Why did you leave?

19           9:10 p.m.: You said you were staying the night.  
20 You said you was tired let's go to bed. Then we get back  
21 there you tell me to sleep but you just stay on your phone.  
22 You confuse me and tell me stuff you gonna do but we never do  
23 it.

24           The following day, less than 12 hours after  
25 Thompson sent those texts, Rodas and her daughter returned to

1 Thompson's house and found him deceased. Thompson had a  
2 noose around his neck in the attic of his home, but when  
3 found, he was lying on his back with his feet protruding  
4 through the ceiling. Despite the fact that Thompson had two  
5 children from a previous relationship, he had recently  
6 changed the beneficiary of his Soldier's Group Life  
7 Insurance, or SGLI, from his children to Rodas. In the week  
8 following Thompson's death, Rodas received \$600,000. Rodas,  
9 who is in the country illegally, obtained a United States tax  
10 identification number based on her marriage to Thompson and  
11 also inherited the home that Thompson closed on two days  
12 before his death.

13           Katia remained married to the father of her child  
14 until September of 2023. Katia would have officially ended  
15 the marriage sooner, but she did not have enough money to pay  
16 for finalizing the divorce and the custody agreement. Based  
17 on evidence from Rodas and Katia's phone, it appears that  
18 Rodas provided Katia with money to finalize her divorce on  
19 September 22, 2023. On October 6, 2023, 14 days after her  
20 divorce was finalized, Katia married Salinas-Cruz in a  
21 ceremony that was only attended by Rodas. Rodas's phone has  
22 pictures of herself cuddling with Cruz in their shared bed  
23 the same day as Cruz's marriage to Katia. Rodas's phone also  
24 contains numerous staged photos that were taken in an effort  
25 to make the marriage look legitimate. The presence of these

1 pictures is not surprising as Salinas-Cruz told law  
2 enforcement in a noncustodial interview, after Katia's death,  
3 that his immigration attorney told him that he needed  
4 pictures with Katia and her child to provide -- or to prove  
5 the legitimacy of his marriage to Katia.

6           At the time Katia married Salinas-Cruz, Katia was  
7 sharing a two-bedroom apartment with Miranda Wadsworth.  
8 Wadsworth's two children and Katia's son also lived in the  
9 apartment. In law enforcement interviews, Wadsworth related  
10 the following information:

11           Katia never mentioned her marriage to Cruz;

12           Cruz never came to the apartment between August  
13 2023, when Wadsworth moved into the apartment, and May 15,  
14 2024;

15           On Tuesday, May 14, 2024, Rodas came to their  
16 shared apartment with boxes and helped Katia pack her  
17 belongings;

18           During the same visit, Rodas offered Wadsworth  
19 boxes to pack her things and informed Wadsworth that she  
20 needed to be out of the apartment by the weekend, that Katia  
21 was coming to live with Rodas, and Katia would be gone for an  
22 extended period of time due to her military service;

23           The only time Cruz ever came to their shared  
24 apartment was on May 15, 2024, two days before Katia was  
25 murdered;

1           On May 15, 2024, Cruz helped Katia load her  
2 belongings from the apartment onto a trailer because,  
3 according to Rodas, Katia and Wadsworth were being evicted;

4           Katia dated a soldier named Dorian Miller from  
5 January 2024 until the time of her death; and

6           Dorian Miller regularly came to their shared  
7 apartment to spend time with Katia and Kendryk, who's Katia's  
8 son.

9           On November 27, 2023, Katia changed the  
10 beneficiary to a portion of her SGLI benefit. The SGLI  
11 benefit is broken down into two separate benefits: An  
12 immediate payment of \$100,000 to assist with funeral costs  
13 and a \$500,000 death benefit. On November 27, 2023, Katia  
14 made Salinas-Cruz the beneficiary of the \$100,000 portion of  
15 her SGLI benefits. When interviewed after Katia's death,  
16 Salinas-Cruz stated that this change was made based on the  
17 advice of an immigration attorney who had informed him that  
18 his marriage would look more legitimate if he was the  
19 beneficiary of his wife's insurance policy. It is notable at  
20 this point that Rodas and Cruz were well aware that a  
21 deceased soldier's death benefit is \$600,000 if you are the  
22 listed beneficiary. However, at this point, Katia kept her  
23 son as the sole beneficiary of her \$500,000 death benefit.

24           On February 7, 2024, Rodas texted Katia to  
25 encourage her to travel with Cruz to Nashville to meet with

1 his immigration attorney. Rodas directed Katia to bring  
2 proof of her military service, her photo identification, and  
3 Kendryk's birth certificate with her to the appointment with  
4 the lawyer and also offered to pay Katia for the day. Rodas  
5 also told her it was very important for her to bring these  
6 things to the attorney because "they can't send the papers  
7 without your information and Reynaldo is very stressed."  
8 Later that day, Rodas texted Katia that they would be fine as  
9 long as nothing legal came up like --

10 THE COURT: Not "as long as." "They would be fine  
11 as nothing legal came up." Right? You said, "As long as,"  
12 and that's not what it says.

13 MR. KURTZMAN: I did, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Is that what you mean, as long as?

15 MR. KURTZMAN: Yes, Your Honor.

16 THE COURT: Okay. Go ahead.

17 MR. KURTZMAN: Like Katia having a boyfriend who  
18 wanted to get married and reassured Katia that they were  
19 halfway there, likely meaning that they were halfway there to  
20 defrauding immigration authorities and getting Salinas-Cruz  
21 his citizenship.

22 The following day, on February 8, 2024, Katia  
23 asked to meet with Rodas over the arranged marriage, and  
24 Rodas told Katia to meet at Pablo's Authentic Mexican  
25 Restaurant in Clarksville. The day after Katia's meeting



1 with Rodas, Salinas-Cruz texted Katia and told her:

2           That he was joking about not giving her a divorce  
3 from their marriage;

4           That he would pay her \$5,000 if he got a positive  
5 result, a citizenship from their fraudulent marriage;

6           That he thought it was appropriate to pay her for  
7 doing him a favor;

8           That she needed to answer him when he needs  
9 information;

10           That she may need to go alone to meet the  
11 immigration lawyer and immigration officials from time to  
12 time; and

13           That she needed to provide him an answer if she is  
14 going to help him.

15           Salinas-Cruz also indicated that he did not want  
16 Rodas to know that he was offering Katia this money. This  
17 would be the last text message between Katia and Cruz -- and  
18 Salinas-Cruz until April 30, 2024, which is evidence that  
19 their marriage was fraudulent.

20           From February 2024 until Katia's death, Rodas and  
21 Katia texted continually about their children, Katia's  
22 successes in the military, their joint business ventures, and  
23 their ongoing efforts to deceive immigration authorities. On  
24 February 14, 2024, Rodas contacted Katia and asked her to  
25 provide the "deer papers" so they could be forwarded to the

1 immigration attorney. Rodas is referring to documents  
2 related to the "Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting  
3 System," which is also known as "DEERS," which is the system  
4 used to enroll family members into the military health care  
5 and benefits system. Presumably, these documents would be  
6 another facet of their efforts to deceive immigration  
7 authorities. Katia did attempt to enroll Salinas-Cruz into  
8 DEERS based on Army records. The following day, Rodas  
9 provided the address for Salinas-Cruz's immigration attorney,  
10 and they agreed to meet there. Katia also assured Rodas that  
11 she would bring Kendryk's birth certificate as well.

12           On March 1, 2024, Katia told Rodas that she needed  
13 information from Salinas-Cruz to file her taxes, and Rodas  
14 responded that she should file as "married filing jointly."  
15 Around this time frame, there were also messages from Katia  
16 to Rodas where Katia is asking how long she should tell the  
17 IRS that she has been living with Salinas-Cruz, despite the  
18 fact that she lived in a shared apartment with Wadsworth this  
19 entire time. On March 21, 2024, Rodas texted Cruz and told  
20 her that the immigration attorney needs two passport pictures  
21 of Katia for Salinas-Cruz's paperwork.

22           On April 4, 2024, Rodas continued to encourage  
23 Katia to complete the DEERS paperwork and also provide her --  
24 and also asked her to provide a power of attorney for  
25 Salinas-Cruz to strengthen his immigration paperwork. It

1 appears from the text messages that an immigration interview  
2 of Katia and Salinas-Cruz would be occurring once the  
3 paperwork was complete. During this same conversation, Rodas  
4 told Katia that, if Katia continues to serve in the  
5 United States Army, Kendryk should come to live with her.

6           In early April 2024, Katia began expressing to  
7 Rodas that she was frustrated with Wadsworth as a roommate.  
8 This frustration appears to be based on Wadsworth's lack of a  
9 job and inability to help with bills. Rodas responded that  
10 she would help Katia with Wadsworth, but "let's also resolve  
11 the migration issue. There is only one month left to find  
12 out if they leave you in the service, and we make the plan  
13 for Kendryk." The "migration" issue is a direct reference to  
14 their efforts to obtain citizenship or a green card for  
15 Salinas-Cruz. Rodas then encouraged Katia to focus on the  
16 immigration issue and then deal with Wadsworth once  
17 Salinas-Cruz's immigration problem was resolved.

18           In mid-April 2024, Katia and Rodas remained in  
19 close communication as Rodas planned a party for Kendryk and  
20 Katia -- planned a -- excuse me, planned a party for Kendryk,  
21 and Katia dealt with the future of her Army career. On  
22 April 19th of 2024, Katia told Rodas that she was going to be  
23 staying in the Army until at least May of 2025. Katia also  
24 described her desire to become a leader of younger soldiers  
25 and to take care of soldiers in a manner which she felt was

1 lacking in her own experience.

2           On April 26, 2024, Rodas contacted her military  
3 psychologist, who she was seeing after Thompson's suicide,  
4 and shared that Katia planned to leave Kendryk, her son, with  
5 Rodas for at least a week and that she felt very bad for  
6 Kendryk that his mother is very irresponsible with him.  
7 Again, there is no evidence that Katia planned to go  
8 anywhere, either on military duty or for personal travels, in  
9 the weeks leading up to her death. Likewise, this message in  
10 late April 2024 is inconsistent with the texts between Rodas  
11 and Katia from February 2024 until Katia's death, all of  
12 which were recovered from Katia's and Rodas's phone, that did  
13 not discuss any plan for Katia to leave Kendryk with Rodas or  
14 Rodas's disapproval of Katia's performance as a parent.

15           On April 30, 2024, Salinas-Cruz began texting with  
16 Katia again about his citizenship application and  
17 communicated, "I need to know if you're going to answer to  
18 know if you can give me proof that you work in the military  
19 because they are asking me urgently." This picks up from  
20 previous conversations where Salinas-Cruz is asking Katia  
21 whether or not she will continue to help him as he tries to  
22 obtain his United States citizenship. Salinas-Cruz and Katia  
23 then do not text each other again until the week of Katia's  
24 death. On May 15, 2024, Katia and Salinas-Cruz texted each  
25 other and agreed to meet at Katia's apartment. Notably,

1 Katia had to provide Salinas-Cruz with the address of her  
2 apartment and a code to enter through the security gate,  
3 which is more circumstantial proof that their marriage was  
4 fraudulent.

5           On May 3, 2024, Rodas and Katia discussed  
6 immigration documents, and Katia changed the \$500,000 portion  
7 of her life insurance to make her son, Kendryk, the primary  
8 beneficiary and Cruz the alternate beneficiary. Katia then  
9 emailed her changed life insurance documents to Rodas so that  
10 Rodas could forward them to their immigration lawyer.

11           During the first week of May, Katia and Rodas  
12 texted numerous times about the immigration fraud. On  
13 May 7, 2021, Rodas sent numerous messages about the need for  
14 various documents and her willingness to pay Katia for  
15 those -- for these documents. During the week of May 11,  
16 2024, Katia informed a fellow soldier that she was in a  
17 fraudulent marriage to get someone citizenship. Katia also  
18 told this fellow soldier that her fake husband had asked her  
19 to have his baby, and Katia shared his desire with her  
20 husband's actual girlfriend, which is Rodas. Katia told this  
21 fellow soldier that Rodas was very upset when Katia shared  
22 this with her.

23           Rodas texted Katia on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, and  
24 it was clear that Rodas was at Katia's apartment and was  
25 interacting with Wadsworth. Rodas texted Katia that she told

1 Wadsworth, "She has to leave this weekend, and Wadsworth says  
2 you haven't told her anything." Katia responded that she  
3 planned to tell Wadsworth about the eviction when she got  
4 home. During this same conversation, Katia asked to stay at  
5 Rodas's home for the week, and Rodas responded, "This is your  
6 house. You are supposed to live here. It is not necessary  
7 to even ask." Wadsworth texted Katia later in the day and  
8 told her that she plans to give her key to the landlord on  
9 Monday.

10               On Wednesday, May 15, 2024, Katia texted Rodas  
11 that "we took everything out of the garage." And Katia is  
12 likely referring to she and Cruz loading up her belongings.  
13 The investigation revealed that all of Katia's belongings,  
14 with the exception of a shower mat and a shower caddy, were  
15 moved to Rodas and Cruz's residence on Wednesday, May 15,  
16 2024. Wadsworth also explained that all of Katia's  
17 belongings were removed from their shared apartment on  
18 May 15, 2024, and Wadsworth informed her mother that she  
19 would be moving back in with her.

20               On Thursday, May 16, 2024, Katia and her son slept  
21 at Rodas and Salinas-Cruz's home. On Friday, May 17, 2024,  
22 Katia left her son with a new babysitter and went into work.  
23 While at work, at 2:16 p.m., Katia changed the \$100,000  
24 portion of her life insurance policy to give half of the  
25 money to her son and the other half to Salinas-Cruz. By

1 5 p.m., Katia and Rodas were together, and by 7:15 p.m.,  
2 Rodas and Katia met a third woman at Pablo's American  
3 Restaurant in Clarksville.

4           Following dinner, Rodas and Katia left the  
5 restaurant and headed towards Katia's apartment. While Rodas  
6 was driving, Katia was texting her boyfriend, but her phone  
7 eventually died before she got home. Based on the security  
8 camera footage, Rodas drove through the gate of Katia's  
9 apartment complex at 10:48 and called Wadsworth at  
10 approximately 10:58, but Wadsworth did not answer the call.  
11 Rodas remained inside Katia's apartment complex until  
12 12:18 a.m., or approximately 90 minutes.

13           On May 18th of 2024, Wadsworth woke up to find the  
14 backdoor of the apartment open, the garage door unlocked, the  
15 front window slightly open, and Katia's phone, which was  
16 dead, outside the front door near the bushes. That morning,  
17 Wadsworth returned Rodas's call, and they spoke for a minute  
18 or two. Wadsworth recalls asking Rodas where Katia was,  
19 since she had found her phone, but Katia's vehicle was not at  
20 the apartment, and Rodas responded that as far as she knew  
21 Katia was with her boyfriend. Wadsworth also noticed that  
22 Katia's bedroom door was locked, which it had not been the  
23 previous day.

24           In the early afternoon of May 18, 2024, Wadsworth  
25 was invited by her friend to go to the Cheatham Dam with her

1 children and joined her friend on that trip. Wadsworth and  
2 her friend both described that they purchased Little Caesar's  
3 pizza as they returned from Cheatham Dam and returned to  
4 Wadsworth's apartment. Wadsworth and her friend each have a  
5 boy and a girl, and the kids were playing in the apartment  
6 after dinner. At a certain point, the boys and girls were  
7 fighting, so Wadsworth attempted to separate them by putting  
8 the girls in her bedroom to play and the boys in Katia's  
9 bedroom. Wadsworth got a utensil to pop the lock and went  
10 into Katia's bedroom. She popped the lock and saw Katia's  
11 flip flops in the middle of the room, which had not been  
12 there the day before. Wadsworth continued into the room and  
13 looked in the closet where she saw Katia covered with a  
14 bathmat.

15           After finding Katia's body, Wadsworth and her  
16 friend took the kids out of the house, and Wadsworth called  
17 911. Katia's autopsy determined that she was stabbed over 60  
18 times in the chest and throat area, her blood alcohol was  
19 very high, and she had Rohypnol, also known as the date rape  
20 drug, in her system.

21           After the scene was clear, Wadsworth traveled with  
22 officers to the Clarksville Police Department to participate  
23 in an interview. Rodas and Cruz showed up together at the  
24 Clarksville Police Department. Rodas and Cruz agreed to  
25 participate in noncustodial interviews. Salinas-Cruz, in a



1 recorded interview, told law enforcement that Katia's car and  
2 possessions were at the house he shared with Rodas; he cared  
3 for Katia's son while Rodas and Katia went out on May 17th;  
4 that his marriage was fake; and that they had entered into  
5 the marriage, or it, only to help him get his United States  
6 citizenship.

7 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, Mr. Kurtzman.  
8 Do you have any questions for the prosecutor,  
9 Ms. Harcombe?

10 MS. HARCOTBE: I do not have any questions.

11 THE COURT: All right.

12 MS. HARCOTBE: I would note that Mr. Salinas-Cruz  
13 is not stipulating to everything that's in this.

14 THE COURT: Yes. Yeah, I'm not going to ask him  
15 to.

16 Mr. Salinas-Cruz, the prosecutor gave a very  
17 detailed recitation of facts starting a couple of years ago,  
18 actually, and I don't expect you to admit all those facts.  
19 However, I must be satisfied that you are pleading guilty  
20 because you are guilty of the offense -- of the offenses  
21 you're pleading guilty to. So with regard to Count One, the  
22 conspiracy to commit marriage fraud, the government would  
23 have to prove these elements to a jury beyond a reasonable  
24 doubt. And I'm going to ask you if you think the government  
25 could prove these elements to a jury beyond a reasonable

1 doubt if you had gone to trial.

2 First, that two or more people agreed to defraud  
3 the United States. Here it's you and -- and Ms. Rodas, your  
4 co-defendant.

5 Does the government also maintain that Katia was a  
6 co-conspirator? Suppose she was, really.

7 MR. KURTZMAN: She's an unindicted --

8 THE COURT: Unindicted co-conspirator.

9 So, anyway, at least two people agreed to defraud  
10 the United States, that you were a party to that agreement,  
11 that you joined in this conspiracy knowing that the objective  
12 was to defraud the United States and intending to join  
13 together with at least one other person to achieve the  
14 objective of defrauding the United States by violating the  
15 immigration laws, and that at some time during the existence  
16 of the conspiracy at least one of the conspirators performed  
17 an overt act to further accomplish the objective of the  
18 agreement, which was to violate the immigration laws.

19 So knowing that the defendant [sic] would have to  
20 prove all those things to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt  
21 for you to be found guilty, do you think the government could  
22 have done that if you had gone to trial on Count One?

23 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

24 THE COURT: For you to be found guilty of  
25 Count Two, the government would have to prove these elements

1 to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt:

2 That you knowingly married a US citizen, and you  
3 entered into this marriage for the purpose of evading the  
4 immigration laws.

5 You think the government could have proved those  
6 two elements against you if you had gone to trial on  
7 Count Two?

8 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

9 THE COURT: So you are pleading guilty because you  
10 are, in fact, guilty of these two charges?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

12 THE COURT: Do you plead guilty to Counts One and  
13 Two?

14 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

15 THE COURT: The Court finds there is a factual  
16 basis for the plea in this case. The Court has observed the  
17 appearance of Mr. Salinas-Cruz and his responsiveness to the  
18 questions asked. Based upon that observation and the answers  
19 to the questions, the Court is satisfied that this defendant  
20 is in full possession of his faculties and competent to plead  
21 guilty; he is not under the apparent influence of narcotics,  
22 hallucinogens or alcohol; he understands the nature of the  
23 charges to which his plea is offered and the maximum possible  
24 penalties provided by law; he is waiving his constitutional  
25 rights to trial and the constitutional rights accorded all

1 persons accused of a crime and has offered to plead guilty  
2 voluntarily.

3 I will accept the plea today.

4 Can we look at March for the sentencing.

5 MS. HARCUMBE: Your Honor, if there is an earlier  
6 date the Court is available, I believe that the probation  
7 office is now caught up, and we don't expect there to be any  
8 records that need to be obtained in this case --

9 THE COURT: Give me a time frame. I can fit it in  
10 whenever you need it. What do you think?

11 MS. HARCUMBE: January or February, guys?

12 PROBATION OFFICER DAVIS: I'm going to defer to my  
13 supervisor.

14 PROBATION OFFICER EVERETT: I would request at  
15 least 90 days, if the Court is able to do 90 days.

16 THE COURT: Okay. Let's see. So that would be --  
17 February 12th would be 90 days.

18 PROBATION OFFICER EVERETT: Yes, ma'am, I think  
19 late January, February would be fine.

20 THE COURT: Okay. How about Friday, February 7th  
21 at 2:00? That work?

22 PROBATION OFFICER DAVIS: Your Honor, that will be  
23 fine.

24 THE COURT: That work?

25 MR. KURTZMAN: Works for the government, Your

1 Honor.

2 MS. HARCOTBE: Works for the defense.

3 THE COURT: 2:00, Friday, February 7th.

4 Okay. Mr. Kurtzman, I wanted to ask you: Are  
5 these defendants under investigation for either of these  
6 murders?

7 MR. KURTZMAN: Yes, Your Honor. I expect both of  
8 them to be -- I expect a homicide charge to be presented to  
9 the Montgomery County Grand Jury in early December.

10 THE COURT: Charging both of them with murder, or  
11 do you know? You don't need to tell me.

12 MR. KURTZMAN: I'm not a hundred percent. I don't  
13 know if it's like an accessory after the fact for the  
14 defendant here or --

15 THE COURT: Okay. All right.

16 And now, Ms. Rojas -- Rojas?

17 MR. KURTZMAN: Rodas.

18 THE COURT: Rodas. She's set for trial on  
19 December 31st. Are you anticipating a trial in this case, in  
20 which case we'd probably need to move that trial to a  
21 different time?

22 MR. KURTZMAN: Do I expect -- I'm not sure,  
23 Your Honor. I don't expect it to go then. I have spoken to  
24 Mr. Perry, and he said it's not going to go then, but I don't  
25 know if he plans to have his client plead here and then go

1 over to state authorities or -- I'm not -- I'm not quite  
2 sure.

3 THE COURT: But you're -- he's told you it would  
4 not be going to trial on December 31st?

5 MR. KURTZMAN: That is what he's communicated,  
6 yes, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: All right. All right. Is there  
8 anything else from the government?

9 MR. KURTZMAN: No, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Anything else from the defense?

11 MS. HARCMBE: No, ma'am.

12 THE COURT: All right. We're in recess.

13 Thank you, Ms. Kristy.

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15 (Proceedings concluded at 2:52 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Patricia A. Jennings, Official Court Reporter  
for the United States District Court for the Middle District  
of Tennessee, with offices at Nashville, do hereby certify:

That I reported on the Stenograph machine the  
proceedings held in open court on November 12, 2024, in the  
matter of UNITED STATES OF AMERICA vs. REYNALDO SALINAS-CRUZ,  
Case No. 3:24-cr-00178-1; that said proceedings in connection  
with the hearing were reduced to typewritten form by me; and  
that the foregoing transcript (pages 1 through 30) is a true  
and accurate record of said proceedings.

This the 2nd day of December, 2024.

/s/ Patricia A. Jennings  
Patricia A. Jennings, RMR, CRR  
Official Court Reporter